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ABSTRACT

This conference report presents papers delivered during the three sessions of the conference. The first session concerned violence against children. In this session, two papers discussed the goal of achieving a healthy childhood for all children. The second session addressed the topic of early child care and education. Papers presented in this session described a two-generation project for providing community-based early childhood care and education in Aberdeen, Scotland, and a multicultural project that served children in a German town with a large population of Turkish immigrants. The sole paper presented in the third session discussed changes in mass media since 1955 and the right of children to receive information that furthers their well-being. A list of conference participants is appended. (BC)

EUROPEAN FORUM FOR CHILD WELFARE
FORUM EUROPEEN POUR LA PROTECTION DE L'ENFANCE
(A regional group of the International Forum for Child Welfare)

Report of the Conference held by the European Forum for Child Welfare in Hamburg on 27/28th April 1992

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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN EUROPE

Report of the Conference held by the European Forum for Child Welfare in Hamburg on 27/28 April 1992

Contents

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Our thanks must go to :

The Conference Group - Ursel Becker, John Fitzgerald Max de Haan and Rita Swinnen

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendhilfe - and especially Peter Marquand and Ursel Becker, for giving EFCW the opportunity to hold its first conference during the impressive child welfare exhibition at the Hamburg Fairground. The hard work done on our behalf and the support given is greatly valued

Max de Haan - for arranging the EFCW Exhibition which illustrated the wide and diverse activities of our members

Our speakers and chairs of sessions, and to the European Commission for its grant which made the administration possible.

INTRODUCTION

Tom White, President, EFCW

This report of the first annual conference of the European Forum for Child Welfare will be of interest not only to our members and subscribers, but to all those who accept that the best interests of children should be paramount. Included in those will be the Commission and European Parliamentarians.

We were particularly pleased that Lissy Gröner, MEP, accepted an invitation to welcome participants to the conference. Mrs Gröner's report "The Problems of Children in the European Community" was accepted as a resolution at the European Parliamentary session in December 1991, and EFCW expects to be involved in the implementation of the recommendations. Lissy is an indefatigable worker for children in the European Parliament.

The conference, held over three days, was divided into sections :

1. Violence against children - Child abuse is an evil perpetuated in all Member States and is of grave concern to all those involved in child welfare. Information sharing and the exchange of ideas and practices are vital if we are to achieve a "healthy childhood" for all our children. The excellent presentations from Germany and the Uk are a start to what will be ongoing work.

2. Early Child Care and Education - Speakers from Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Scotland highlighted the need for a holistic approach when working with children living in deprived and disadvantaged situations. Parents from, for example, ethnic minority communities, isolated rural areas and run down inner cities suffer from poverty and social exclusion. They need support, encouragement and educational opportunities to realize their strength and discover their potential. The effective examples illustrated in this report of the empowerment of parents, and consequently of differing child rearing practices will raise the question that all such families throughout Europe should have access to appropriate support services.

3. Changes in Media Use and Children's Right to Good Information - According to Article 17 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child :

   * Children should be protected from information injurious to their well-being.

* Mass media should be encouraged to disseminate information that furthers children's well-being.

Professor van der Voort's paper, focusing on the contribution of media to children's knowledge and cognitive development shows there has been a decline of information derived from radio, newspapers, periodicals, which is compensated only in part by the growing information received through television. He suggests that children's education and cognitive development is best served by a balanced media mix. How to lobby to achieve this is something which should concern all EFCW members.

This first conference organized by EFCW was undoubtedly a success which augers well for the future co-operation of child welfare NGOs in the European Community, in the interests of the 120 million children and young people in the Community.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN EUROPE

Lissy Gröner/European Member of Parliament

I have been asked to deliver a short welcome, and am very honoured to address you on this occasion. We all have a common interest : that is to strengthen children's rights in Europe and elsewhere. Children are the weakest members of society and must, therefore, be given special care and protection.

After 10 years work, the UN finally adopted the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" in November 1989. This convention is of fundamental importance, since infringements of the rights of children are many and frequent in all parts of the world.

In developing countries over 40.000 children a day die of undernourishment and diseases which could be prevented by systematic inoculation. About 100 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 do not attend school; in fact, funding for education in the developing countries is decreasing. Over 50 million children work under appalling conditions. Innumerable young people are conscripted into the army. Children undergo great suffering in wars and in the resulting floods of refugees.

Only an improvement in the economic situation of these countries can lead to an improvement in the lives of the children who live there. The Community should increase international co-operation, particularly where there is a legal basis, as is the case in the ACP States.

In the European Community, the problems of children, which are due to the failings of adults, mainly take the form of a denial of the development of their personality and their living environment, violence against them, neglect and lack of love. Up to now, child policies in the EC Member States vary considerably, and the creation of the Single Market asks for a number of positive actions to be taken by the EC.

The most fundamental rights of the child need to be protected at every level, from international organisations to the individual citizen, to enable every child to experience the joy of childhood in dignity and to grow up with confidence in itself and others. Only in this way can he or she be prepared to participate in the society of the future with the sense of responsibility, solidarity and confidence, which are prerequisites to a fulfilled life.

The UN convention defines the basic rights which every child in the world ought to enjoy in the following way :

- The right to sufficient food, clean water and air and basic medical care.

- The right to a name, a nationality and a family.

- The right to education, recreation and free time.

- Social rights such as the right to social security benefits and an appropriate standard for living.

- Equal rights for girl and boy children.

- The right of particular groups of children to protection (the disabled, refugees, members of minorities).

- The right to protection from exploitation and abuse :

  * work
  * sexual acts
  * drugs
  * abduction
  * torture
  * war, etc.

- The right to protection of basic freedoms :

  * The freedom of information.
  * The freedom to form an opinion and express it freely.
  * The freedom to meet and assemble.
  * The right to a private life.
  * The right to freedom of religion.

After ratification by over 20 Member States of the UN, the convention came into force on 2 September 1990. Eight EC Member States have ratified the convention up to now. Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have not yet done so.

Until now, children have received very little attention from the Community institutions. The few projects carried out for children and young people have been in connection with freedom of movement for migrant workers and occupational training. In my report on the problems of the children in the EC, I therefore call for the following action to be taken :

1. The Member States which have not done so yet, ought to ratify the UN convention immediately, without any restrictions.

2. A legal basis must be created in the European Treaties to enable a Community policy on children to be formulated, respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

3. With a view to the completion of the Single Market in 1992, the Commission ought to submit - as a matter of urgency - an action programme for children in the Community; adequate funding must be guaranteed.

4. A working party on children's rights should be set up and the individual Member States should do likewise at national level.

5. Children have a right to the protection and preservation of vital resources.

6. The EC environmental standards should take the children's more sensitive organisms into consideration.

7. A directive on child care is needed. The Council's recommendation is not sufficient.

The Summit of Maastricht has not brought a substantial improvement with regard to child policy. Only in the field of social policies have the competences been slightly strengthened. Therefore, co-operation between the various organisations throughout the EC need to be enforced. A network, or rather a lobby for children, needs to be created. May I ask you to contribute to this important project.

I feel that this seminar is already one step towards this goal.

SESSION I

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Chair : John Fitzgerald
Director, The Bridge Consultancy, UK

Speakers : Katharina Abelmann-Vollmer
Deutscher Kinderschutzbund, Germany

Valerie Howarth
Director, Child Line, UK

INTRODUCTION

John Fitzgerald, Director, The Bridge Consultancy

I want to open the session by reading you a short extract from a report called "Sukina - an evaluation of the circumstances leading to her death".

> "Sukina, aged 5, died on 6 December 1988, following a sustained and ferocious attack upon her by her father. What follows is a description of the events of that day as they emerged from the murder inquiry and the comments made to The Bridge by Sukina's father.
>
> The incident began with the father asking Sukina and her sister to spell their names, which they would not, or could not, do. When the request was repeated, both girls still did not respond. The father then hit Sukina on the hand with a ruler repeatedly, asking her to spell her name. Sukina still did not do so, but her younger sister spelled her own name.
>
> Sukina never did spell her name as her father requested and, as each demand was not met with the response the father wanted, the attack escalated. She was beaten first with the ruler, then with a short length of rigid plastic tubing and finally with a length of kettle flex which had the kettle attachment at one end, but not the three pin plug. We do not know how long the attack lasted, but at least 50 blows were rained upon her, interspersed with repeated demands that she spelled her name. Sukina, at one stage, when she was too weak to stand, tried to crawl out of the room to the stairs, asking her father to stop hitting her.
>
> Sukina's mother tried to intervene and was herself assaulted, causing injuries to her face which required a hospital examination. The attack on Sukina however continued until she was barely conscious, at which point she was taken, by her parents, to the bathroom and placed in a bath of warm water in an attempt to revive her. At one point, whilst lying in the bath, Sukina tried to lift herself from the lying position but was unable to do so. As she slipped into unconsciousness, Sukina told her father that she was sorry. Although an ambulance was called, Sukina was already dead on arrival at the hospital.

Apart from the pain of the attack itself, we can only speculate on the feelings of terror she must have experienced throughout the assault, but Sukina's apology to her father meant that she, like so many abused children before her, was coping with the feeling that what had happened was her fault."

That happened not in some back street of a corrupt, or despotic regime, but in the United Kingdom.

It did not happen because of poverty or stress, but because the level of violence used was acceptable to the perpetrator, in order to impose his will.

It did not happen as one isolated incident, but as a combination of sadistic abuse, over a three year period.

It is sadly not unique to the United Kingdom. Whatever may be said, something similar will happen today somewhere in the countries represented at this conference.

Violence, in the form that killed Sukina, or through sexual abuse, or organized abuse, is a fact of life and a direct contradiction of a view that children have rights.

Our two speakers will share with us their perspective of the subject and then there will be an opportunity to explore what this European Forum perspective should be.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Katharina Abelmann-Vollmer

What can I tell you about violence against children? Like me, most of you have worked for a long time in the field of lobbying, research or practical work to ameliorate the life of our children, especially for the abused, deprived, and handicapped. So, I think, I cannot explain anything new to you concerning child abuse, neglect, or sexual exploitation.

Therefore, I will start with an old story, the West Side Story. Most of you will remember the musical, the film, the music, the story. And most of us have to deal with the same problem : deviant behaviour and the causes of it; we all do have our West Sides in our cities, communities, countries.

I will quote one scene for you. You remember Officer Krupke and the performance the boys of the white "American" gang do after his leaving?

Here it is :

SNOWBOY (imitating Krupke) : Hey, you!
ACTION : Me, Officer Krupke?
SNOWBOY : Yeah, you! Gimme one good reason for not dragging ya down the station house, ya punk.

ACTION :
Dear kindly Sergeant Krupke,
You gotta understand.
It's just our bringin' up-ke
That gets us out of hand.
Our mothers are all junkies,
Our fathers are all drunks.
Golly Moses, natcherly we're punks!

ACTION and QUARTET
Gee, Officer Krupke, we're very upset;
We never had the love that every child oughta get.
We ain't no delinquents,
We're misunderstood.
Deep down inside us there is good!

SNOWBOY (imitating Krupke)
That's a touching good story.
ACTION : Lemme tell it to the world!
SNOWBOY ("Krupke") : Just tell it to the judge.

ACTION (to "Judge")
Dear kindly Judge, your Honor,
My parents treat me rough.
With all their marijuana,
They won't give me a puff.
They didn't want to have me,
But somehow I was had.
Leapin lizards, that's why I'm so bad!

DIESEL ("Judge")
Right!
Officer Krupke, you're really a square;
This boy don't need a Judge, he needs an analyst's care!
It's just his neurosis that oughta be curbed.
He's psychologic'ly disturbed!

...
DIESEL ("Judge") : In the opinion of this court, this child is depraved on account he ain't had a normal home.
ACTION : Hey, I'm depraved on account I'm deprived!
DIESEL ("Judge") : So take him to a headshrinker.

ACTION (to "Psychiatrist")
My daddy beats my mummy,
My mummy troubles me.
My grandpa's a commy,
My grandma pushes tea.
My sister wears a mustache,
My brother wears a dress.
Goodness gracious, that's why I'm a mess!

A-RAB ("Psychiatrist")
Yes!
Officer Krupke, he shouldn't be here!
This body don't need a couch, he needs a useful career.
Society's played him a terrible trick,
And sociologic'ly he's sick!

...
A-RAB ("Psychiatrist") : In my opinion, this child don't need to have his head shrunk at all. Juvenile delinquency is purely a social disease!
... So take him to a social worker!

ACTION (to "Social Worker")
Dear kindly social worker,
They tell me get a job,
Like be a soda jerker,
Which means like be a slob.
It's not I'm anti-social,
I'm only anti-work.
Glory Osky, that's why I'm a jerk!

BABY JOHN (imitating female social worker)
EEK!
Officer Krupke, you've done it again.
This boy don't need a job, he needs a year in the pen.
It ain't just a question of misunderstood;
Deep down inside him, he's no good!

...
DIESEL ("Judge")
The trouble is he's crazy.
A-RAB ("Psychiatrist")
The trouble is he drinks.
BABY JOHN (Social Worker")
The trouble is he's lazy.
DIESEL ("Judge")
The trouble is he stinks.
A-RAB ("Psychiatrist")
The trouble is he's growing.
BABY JOHN ("Social Worker")
The trouble is he's grown!
ALL
Krupke, we got troubles of our own!
Gee, Officer Krupke,
We're down on our knees,
'Cause no one wants a fella with a social disease.

The first performance of the musical on Broadway was on August 20, 1957. Every time I hear that song I am impressed how topical it still is. But I did not quote it for you because I like it, but because I see two parallels to our subject of today.

First : The analysis why people are acting out violently is still the same. We do use almost the same explanations for violence against children within the family like the boys do in their satire.

There is the "**social disease**". We all know that intra-familial violence is a problem which is very strong connected with the structure of our societies. As early as 1977, David Gil analyzed five levels of what he called "disguised violence" in our societies :

1. <u>The development and control of resources</u>

It is still true that "a significant majority of the population ... is propertyless as far as control over productive resources is concerned, while a minority ... owns and controls almost all the productive resources. The majority depends consequently on the minority for access to, and use of, productive resources for their survival". (D Gil, Societal Violence and Violence in Families, paper presented at the

Second World Conference of the International Society on Family Law, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, p9).

2. The organisation of work and production

Perhaps the development during the last fifteen years has aggravated the situation at the working places since Gil wrote: "Employees are thus not only exploited in an economic sense by being deprived of a major share of their products; they are also oppressed psychologically, because of the dehumanizing dynamics of the prevailing organization of production which obstructs, ie violates, the unfolding of their capacities in the work context". (D Gil, loc cit. p14).

Over and above that we have to take into account the increasing rate of unemployment throughout all our countries.

3. The socialization

Socialization in this context of society's structure is to prepare children for their "roles as citizens, wage-laborers, and surplus people". (D Gil, loc cit. p16).

In schools we can observe a growing of competitive dynamics and pressure to do well. Families are insecure about the future of their children, but they have to train them for the demands of unknown working conditions. So "schools and families play unwitting roles in reproducing a hierarchally structured workforce out of correspondingly structured social strata". (D Gil, loc cit. p18).

4. The distribution of rights

For the part of the distribution of rights, Gil summarizes that "one can thus not avoid two related conclusions, (1) that latent, and often not so latent, inter-personal violence is an essential, though not sufficient, requirement for success in the competition for income and rights, and (2) that legitimate rights in competitively organized societies tend to be rooted in latent or manifest violence". (D Gil, loc cit. p21).

These conclusions are more than true for children : without the power to use violence they cannot claim their rights in our societies.

5. The values

"Values are culturally transmitted guides for human behavior and relations (...)". (D Gil, loc cit. p28).

If the abovementioned conclusions are right we can assume that there are very effective values which condone and suggest violence. In our struggle for banning corporal punishment of

children we are very often confronted with this strong belief in the necessity of so-called educational beatings.

In our booklet "**Help - No Violence**", the Kinderschutzbund describes some **effects of this structural violence** which we learned add a lot to the genesis of violence within the family for instance :

- No places for children, because there are very little open spaces and traffic has become more and more dangerous for children.

- Apartments are too small, too expensive, poorly soundproofed or simply not available for families.

- A school system which orientates itself more to cognitive standards and requirements of the bureaucracy than to the needs of children.

- The increased influence of mass media, TV, video games, computer games, which give a model for violent problem solving patterns and keep children in a non-participating attitude.

- The serious damages to the children's health through the pollution of the environment.

- The disadvantage of families through taxes, the organisation of the working hours, the deficits in the availability of kindergartens and so on.

- The discrimination of special groups which damages the development of millions of children, like single parent families, migrant or asylum seeking families, large and welfare families, etc.

- The common attitude to children which allows them to be treated as if they were not yet human, to train them, to beat them, to exploit them in work or sexually, briefly, as a German researcher called it : "We have a structural negligence of **the child as a child**. (Michael-Sebastian Honig, Verhäuslichte Gewalt, 1986).

So, there are a lot of symptoms which point to violence against children as a "social disease".

And we have to deal with "psychologic'ly disturbed" people, too. The West Side boys mention almost all the reasons we mention when we talk about the aspect of "**personal violence**" :

- They never had the love that every child oughta get.

- Their parents treat them rough.

- They didn't want to have the child.

- The child is depraved on account he ain't had a normal home.

- The daddy beats the mummy, the mummy troubles the child.

- The mothers are junkies, the father are drunks.

- And even the grandparents and the siblings are not what we call a "normal family".

Translated to our more professional language we explain the "family factors" which contribute to the origin of violence within the family as follows :

- The family is in a special way exposed to the problem of personal violence because the structure of the family is itself characterized by the balance of power and dependancy.

- The family has changed from a more economic unit to a more emotional unit. Founded on love and care these emotions often wane during family life. This is a weak basis and an increasing number of children experience more than one family during childhood.

- Without very much support from society the family has to educate the children to become good, useful and responsible citizens. How the parents should manage this is not clearly defined as we all know best in the use of corporal punishment.

Together with these factors, parents have to deal with a lot of economic, social and psychological stress factors. If they do have a life-history burdened with experiences of abandonment, punishment, abuse or exploitation we expect too much of them not to act violently when the baby spits the milk for the third time.

Summarized : The boys of the Jet-Gang have been right with their diagnosis why they are "so bad" : It is as well a psychological disturbance as a sociological sickness. And what was true in 1957 for the origins of juvenile delinquency is still true in 1992 for the genesis of violence against children.

The second parallel I see is how the "professionals" react to the stories. Officer Krupke takes the boys to the Judge - he himself only knows the station house to deal with the gang.

The Judge delegates the problem to the psychiatrist, it is he who diagnoses a "neurosis".

The psychiatrist, too, is not responsible : he uses a sociological argumentation to get rid of the boys.

And the social worker, who cannot give them a good career, hands them back to the police.

Finally, forgetting their former interpretations, all of them agree : the boys are lazy, crazy, they drink and stink. So there is only one solution : put them away, drag them down to the pen.

The same pattern we often experience when it comes to violence against children :

Politicians argue that their decisions give best opportunities to both children and parents, and parents should do better. They have given a lot of financial support to social services - so if parents fail it is the duty of the social workers to look after them.

Social workers talk about their case load of 30.000 families, that they cannot give them jobs, apartments, money, food, etc. And they do not have the time for sufficient advice which is needed to break the cycle of violence. So they have to refer the "client" to an educational counselling service.

The psychologists and therapists are so occupied with the whole range of difficult children that they unfortunately have a waiting list of three to six weeks. But they know that the problem of intra-familial violence cannot wait and therefore special services like crises centers, child protection centers, emergency care, are necessary.

The multi-professional staff of these mostly non-governmental institutions is very concerned about violence against children, they work overtime, they co-operate with all other social services and the medical staff, they develop new programmes for help and support for families, they share their ideas with colleagues and publish them. But they do have one unsolved problem : all their institutions are too small, the staff is underpaid and they often have to struggle to get the finances for the next year. So they call in the politicians again and demand : the development of special services for children and families must have political priority.

Now we are at the beginning again and we can start with slightly different arguments and forget - while discussing the share of responsibilities - the needs of the children.

But still there are suffering children and parents. What can we do with all our knowledge and our goodwill to really help them?

There is an answer which is not very new or very witty, but still an answer : **we have to start earlier.**

Since I began my work in the field of child abuse and neglect in 1978, I have heard a lot about the necessity for prevention. But till now I cannot see much effort to really develop effective preventive programmes in Germany. Perhaps it is different in your countries.

What I see are activities which set the responsibility for their own protection on children, especially with the problem of sexual exploitation.

And I know of some plans to develop a check-list to distinguish future "violent" parents from "normal" parents, etc.

In my opinion, these programmes only look at one single aspect of the whole pattern of violence within the family, and are not very effective to reduce violence all in all.

Therefore, the Kinderschutzbund tried to evolve a comprehensive approach to prevention. We adopted the basic considerations of James Garbarino, who developed a framework for child safety programmes. It is based on a socioecological approach and the main aspect Garbarino phrased like this : "Any policy or program must contend with the interconnectedness as expressed in what has been called the first law of ecology : you can never do just one thing". (James Garbarino, Preventing Childhood Injury : Developmental and Health Issues, American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 58 (1) 1988, p28).

This child safety programme we enlarged to a "**Healthy Childhood**" programme, following the WHO project "Healthy Cities".

We use the same conceptual framework for all kinds of harm to children, classified in four broad categories along a continuum : from random damage, preventable damage, negligently caused damage, to damage caused by assault. The definition of what is random or preventable or assault is a "social process reflecting the interaction of community concepts and scientific expertise about what is and what is not socially and technically feasible". (J Garbarino, loc cit. p26).
And it depends on historical change and contemporary variation.

Knowing that the origins of childhood damages are multiple and diverse and preventive orientations can be similarly numerous, we have to proceed with a more concrete scheme to plan, classify, and evaluate our preventive actions.

Garbarino proposes a three factors framework :

1. The source of risk to the child.
2. The target for preventive intervention.
3. The method for delivering the intervention.

In the category "**source of risk**" we put eight different elements :

1. Environmental hazards : This includes all kinds of pollution and the harm it does to the immature body of children, but just as much phenomenons as dreads of war or the future and the consequences for the well-being of children.

2. Situations of family life : Economic and social disadvantage of families can have a direct effect on the health of children, for instance deficiency symptoms in children of poor families.

3. Residential and house conditions : Just to mentio some of too many aspects which are risky for the child's development : the dominance of traffic even in residential areas, misplanning of architects, lacking or bad playgrounds, apartments with an 8^2m child's room, and so on.

4. Structure of service provisions : The availability of day care, medical care and other psychological or social services differ very much from one area to the other. Especially in rural areas minor handicaps of babies often go unrevealed and, therefore, untreated, but they can cause a major handicap which will last the whole life.

5. Self-destructive child behaviour : We, too, have to look at these risks for children which ranges from mouthing of objects by infants to reckless behaviour by adolescents like subway-surfing. Carefully scrutinized must be the often more subtle self-destructive behaviour arising from emotional deprivation.

6. Inappropriate parenting : Without prejudice against parents we need a minimal standard for parental care. The special role of parents in the life of children warrants a special category for them in assessing adults as sources of risk : this ranges from lack of supervision and negligence, excessive demands on children, to corporal punishment and exploitation.

7. Familiar persons : This category includes all adults who act in loco parentis like teachers and baby-sitters, as well as neighbours and acquaintances, and all professional and volunteer helpers of the child and the family. The risks are similar to the ones caused by parents.

8. Strangers : These attacks can include kidnapping, bullying, or sexual molestation. But we include, too, car drivers who pass a schoolbus, playground or schoolyard with unreduced space.

In the everyday life of children they often have to live with more than just one source of risk. And we often try to solve all the misery at once. But most of the time we are not very successful with it. So it is better to start with one and remember the first law of ecology : you can never do just one thing. That means : with our first carefully planned and effectively carried out step we will improve more than one aspect of the child's life.

The next factor we have to think about is the target for preventive actions. We distinguish five different target groups with different possibilities and influences :

1. Political decision-makers and the administration.
2. Industrial companies and the service sector.
3. The public.
4. Caregivers.
5. Children themselves.

1. **Politicians** have the possibility to pass legislation and regulations aimed at controlling or preventing sources of risk. The priority they set to such actions can decrease or increase directly the risk for children. The best example for this influence again : banning corporal punishment. Through wrong decisions or failure of actions they can cause acceptance for sources of risk or allow new ones to develop.

2. **Responsible members of companies or services** can reduce risks for children through the development of child-proof and child-catered products, through arrangements in supermarkets which reduce conflicts between child and mother instead of provoking it, through avoidance of sexualized performances of children in commercials.

3. **The public** : Through information and enlightenment of the public we can achieve that more people discover sources of risk and we can empower them to take preventive actions in their environment.

4. **Caregivers** : Caregivers, parents as well as other adults, who are responsible for children are an important target group. We can encourage them to take actions against sources of risk and support them not to become a source of risk themselves.

5. **Children** : Before we turn to children as targets for preventive programmes we have to ensure that they are able to influence the risk in a reliable way, that they are able to master a new behaviour and if they are in a position to demonstrate this behaviour in appropriate contexts. Most of the sources of risk cannot be influenced by children and they are not responsible for them. But if we address our preventive programmes to children we have to take into account their age, their gender, their denomination, their origin, and their social conditions.

If we want to be effective with our preventive programmes we have to decide carefully which target group will be the most helpful, the most influential, and the most easily attainable.

The third and last category we have to think about is our method to deliver our preventive interventions. We often observe in our organisation the volunteers being so dedicated to their work are convinced that everybody will react in the same way, you only have to tell him. But this is the reason for a lot of discouragement, frustration, burn-out and retreat. Like Garbarino in his child safety programme, we have five elements how to reach our target group successfully.

1. Lobbying

As I mentioned before, political decisions to reduce sources of risk for children may have enormous preventive effects. To convince politicians and the administration we need detailed knowledge about legislation, planning processes, budgets, and the "right" people to address, etc.; to suggest concrete changes and to have strong partners.

2. Public relation work

In the past, we often looked to public relation as a separate part of our work. But we have to use it as an instrument to achieve our aims : to bring to the public eye the multiple sources of risk to a "Healthy Childhood", to inform and enlighten the public about these problems and how we can prevent them, to empower people to take their responsibility in their circle of acquaintances, areas, communities, and to gain a real lobby and pressure group for the needs and interests of children.

3. Programme materials

We have to check our booklets, pamphlets, videos, posters, etc., to re-examine whether our materials are really describing the source of risk we want to prevent and addressing the right target group. And we have to be a bit more professional with the lay-out - especially in Germany. We have to say goodbye to the common idea that struggling for underprivileged people needs an appearance of pauperism.

4. Group instruction

Workshops, seminars, classes, theatre and discussion groups, and community forums are examples for group instruction. We have to put it more in the service of a well directed prevention.

5. Individualized training

Such efforts can involve face-to-face training or one-to-one guidance by trained workers of a concrete prevention programme.

Now I am finished with the description of our "**Healthy Childhood Prevention Programme**" and will give you a short example for one of our preventive actions : Since 1979 the Kinderschutzbund has been struggling for the banning of corporal punishment. I do not have to explain to you that corporal punishment is a source of risk to millions of children. Until now, we have addressed our efforts mainly to politicians and the public. We used lobbying, information material, discussion groups, and the media as methods to achieve our aim. Now we want to heighten the sense of responsibility for this risk within the professionals. We will have a panel discussion at the Jugendhilfetag.

And for the very end, I will quote another song of the West Side Story for you :

There is a time for us,
Some day a time for us,
Time together with time to share,
Time to look, time to care.

This is my desire and my belief for our work in a united Europe. We will have the time to improve the conditions of life for all our children, and to make their rights to a "**Healthy Childhood**" come true.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Valerie Howarth
Executive Director, ChildLine

Introduction

Whatever the nation, culture or creed one fact is truly international, violence to children.

It may vary in its form, the expectations of children in a war torn country such as Yugoslavia will contrast with those in an emerging free nation like Romania and will again be different from the experiences of children in Western Europe. When we consider each of these situations we might expect the children of Western Europe to have a good chance of growing up in a non violent society or family but their experiences leave us with little to be proud of. Whether it be children living through the destruction in Northern Ireland or young people caught up in street violence or being beaten, tortured or sexually abused in their own homes, it leaves much to be done to protect children. Is there anywhere where children are truely valued? Recognising our wider context, this paper concentrates on the expectations of children in Western Europe.

The problem about violence to children is its definition. For professionals, usually working within a legal framework, it means considering the level of significant harm to a child, weighing the level of risk with the trauma of intervention and balancing all of these with the support or services available. For the child it means terror, secrets, fear of losing their family or getting parents into trouble. In situations where children are suffering violence within their own home, they are usually in a losing situation whatever the outcome.

ChildLine the UK telephone helpline for children in trouble or in danger counsels hundreds of children each week. The callers bring a range of troubles to our counsellors, problems about family conflict, bullying, pregnancy, running away. Amongst their pain, the greatest statistical problems are physical and sexual abuse. Although the national statistics in England and Wales indicate that reported violence to children is reducing, the cries for help to non-governmental organisations is increasing. Physical violence accounts for 16% of total calls to ChildLine, however, in the search for statistics we can forget the individual child. Children like Anna, aged 13 who was being beaten and bruised by her father, a man who commanded respect inside and outside his family because he was a doctor. The caller was very timid, having considered telling the teachers at school but afraid that they would report the abuse to the 'authorities' or that she would not be believed, because of her father's status. She had an overwhelming sense of responsibility for what was happening to her, and was highly concerned about "splitting the family, hurting mum and wrecking their marriage".

Significant Harm

To help children we need both sound conceptual frameworks through which we can consider the information about what is happening to them and a capacity to listen so that we hear what is being said rather than what we want to hear. In relation to the first the following outline can be helpful:

a) Physcial Abuse: Physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or not prevented.

b) Neglect: The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in serious impairment of that child's health or development. This may take the form of exposure to danger or repeated failure to attend to the physical and/or developmental needs of a child.

Alternatively, it may be a failure to thrive on the part of the child resulting from neglect.

c) Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child which has a severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of that child.

d) Sexual Abuse: The involvement of dependent, immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not really comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, which violate the social taboos of family life and are knowingly not prevented by the carer.

4) Organised Abuse: Either physical or sexual but usually sexual abuse with threats to induce the silence of the child or children. May be within or outside the family.

Working Together

Workers faced with children who have experienced violence usually find themselves working together with multiprofessional groups to find some kind of resolution to the issues. If you are from a non governmental organisation this probably means that you have a less powerful voice than those from statutory or government organisations unless there is a mandate to take a central role in the work as with the NSPCC in the United Kingdom. In considering and establishing significant harm, Bentovim suggests that it is necessary to consider with other agencies involved in the situation:

1. The family context in which significant harm occurs.

2. The process of the development of the child in this context.

3. The nature of significant harm in terms of ill treatment and its effects on development with or without intervention.

4. The nature of significant impairment which includes developmental issues, physical factors, parental contributions, and other factors and comparison with a similar child.

5. The link with an assessment of parental care, and what it is reasonable to expect of parents.

6. The plan of each agency and the effects of intervention.

In England and Wales, this relates to the way the legislation (Section 31 of the Children Act) points our thinking towards the parents, but where in all of this is the view of the child? It is crucial to listen to what is being said.

Listening to Children

ChildLine recently undertook a study of violence to children in Scotland. Looking across the records similar patterns are reflected throughout the work. In Scottish children, "punishment" was often administered using a belt. Some times the belt was studded. Alcohol is regularly a complicating factor, several children mentioning payday for their parents as a bad one for them, since they spent their earnings on alcohol and then came home in a violent mood. Some parents' drinking seemed to be exacerbated by particularly difficult family circumstances, such as the father of a 14 year-old boy who was taking his marital breakdown very badly and was hitting his son with extreme violence, not only using a belt but also fists and an iron bar.

Children sometimes spoke about violence towards siblings and other family members, particularly mothers. Fathers and mothers were the perpetrators in nearly all of this sample, with fathers in 61% of the cases and mothers in 33%. Other perpetrators were grandfathers, stepfathers, uncles and aunts, brothers, teachers and mother's boyfriend. There was some evidence of parents

abusing their children together, such as the child whose mother held him down while his father hit him, or the 14 year-old girl who had been beaten with a belt every night since the age of nine by her father, and whose mother didn't do anything to protect her. There were a number of instances where only the abusing parent was in the home and the child felt particularly lacking in support.

Many of the children were unable to say why they had been punished in this way; indeed, gratuitous violence seemed the only explanation in a majority of cases, such as the children whose parents administered regular beatings as a matter of course. However, there were, as mentioned before, obvious examples of additional strain being placed on families such as bereavement, family breakdown and unemployment. A girl of 14 called ChildLine after her father hit her with a belt following an argument he had with her mother. It was the first time he had hit her and it seemed that he was taking out his anger and aggression on his daughter. A boy called ChildLine because his father was starting sexual advances after the departure of his mother three weeks previously, and beat him with a belt if he did not comply. A girl of only 9 whose mother had been killed in a car crash and whose father was beating the children was in danger of losing an ally in her sister, who was threatening to leave the family and live with her boyfriend.

Physical violence was often accompanied by other signs of abuse and neglect. A caller was regularly beaten and deprived of food. Children of both sexes were being sexually as well as physically abused, and one girl was beaten with a belt in the genital area. Another, aged 14, said her father tied her to a bed when he beat her and sexually abused her. He was a policeman and had custody of the child after a divorce. Children often seemed to have no-one else in the family to support them; perhaps others felt that they could not interfere in the way in which their parents were "bringing them up". One child's grandmother was obviously upset and affected by the beatings meted out on her grandchild but did not stop the abuse; her reaction was either to burst into tears or leave the room.

How often do adults listen to what these children are telling them of their experiences and their implications for their families. There are other messages we do not want to hear. Whilst it is clear that most abuse is perpetrated by men, sometimes together with female partners but often also beating up the mother and other siblings. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that in ChildLine's records 29% showed women as the perpetrators.

Children also damage other children. Maybe if we could stem this violence at an early age then we would have more chance of stopping adult to child violence. In the Spring of 1990 ChildLine opened a special Bullying Line supported by the Gulbenkian Foundation. Over 20% of the incidents reported to the Bullying Line were violent ones and in 70% of the cases they were boys. We also ran a special project in Boarding Schools which also revealed that boys were far more likely than girls to be involved in violent incidents. (Surely this is an indication that problems of male violence are already beginning when individuals are still children, a view confirmed by other research, as in Tattum and Lane). One case reported on the Bullying Line concerned a boy who came home from school and went straight to bed after having been kicked in the stomach and hit on the head, and in another, a younger boy complained: "I'm not a child any longer, I'm a punch-ball". A 14 year-old girl reported an attached by a large of younger children that put her friend in hospital and left the caller too frightened to go to school. Had the individuals in such cases been adults, charges of assault or grievous bodily harm might well have been brought. Clearly this is violence at a level which no school should tolerate.

Almost all violence has to do with exerting power over another individual. Similar findings amongst children. The latest annual Home Office figures report that of all offenders cautioned or found guilty of sex offences, 32% were under 21 and 17% under the age of 16.

Professional "blinkers"

Why do we fail to recognise what children are telling us about the pain they are suffering (through their verbal and non verbal communications). This Conference was introduced by reference to a little girl called Sukina, regularly visited, seen by social workers and health visitors, clearly indicating that all was far from well but to all intents and purposes unseen.

Workers do have their own agendas, blinkers and boundaries. Assessment is seldom objective. Issues of culture, expectation and the framework of the law will all influence what action is or not taken by a concerned professional. In recognising ethnic differences in child learning for example, some workers have set lower standards in relation to physical violence when dealing with black families, much to the dismay of black workers. When faced with poverty there have been muddled reactions from removing a child into clean but uncaring institutions to ignoring severe emotional abuse. Certainly, in the United Kingdom the problems to be faced in the legal system are enough to deter anyone from trying to protect an abused child.

Conclusion

Whatever the problems, issues of child protection must be faced and practice improved. No one agency can do this alone and it is crucial that those involved with a child work and act together. But whatever we do we must listen to the child.

I am reminded of the outing of blind men visiting the zoo. They came to an elephant and one said to the others what a strange creature it seemed, huge like a house. Another with his hand on the tail declared that it was like a brush whilst another with arms around a leg said it was a tree. Nonsense called the last with his hand on the trunk, it is like a large snake. Conferences about children can be as unseeing inconsidering the whole situation facing the child. But we do have the child to see and hear. Listen and children like Sukina might have a chance of life.

CLOSING SUMMARY

Violence against children may be seen in terms of poverty and/or stress.

For most children where abuse occurs, this is a result of families struggling against the pressure of poverty or environmental stress. The parents are as unhappy when they hit their child as are social welfare services. The challenge for European child welfare organisations is finding ways to influence policy so that poverty and environmental pressure can be reduced and with it the stresses which cause parents to hit a child.

But for a small majority of children, the issue is much more finely focused. They are children who live in situations where poverty or stress are not the issues, but rather facing a culture where the systematic use of violence to impose an individual's will is the norm.

In my view, child welfare organisations, whether they be non-governmental organisations or public agencies, are ill equipped to identify and deal with such situations, and as a consequence will seek to deny the existence of such a problem.

In part this is because we share the civilized view of caring for children with our societies in general. Consequently, we identify with the "How could anyone do this to a child?" view of life.

Sadly, in my view we need to face up to the fact that there are people in our societies who, in order to impose their will, use a variety of violent acts to instil fear and thus achieve their goals.

This is a perspective that is well understood by those dealing with adult violent offenders and yet we have not, to-date, effectively translated that understanding into child protection.

My own organisation is currently seeking funding to set up an action study that will address these issues, by looking at the range of research and clinical experience that exists within professions dealing with adults who have committed acts of violence against adults. We shall be looking to provide a European perspective by consulting with child welfare agencies outside of the United Kingdom.

With the barriers, in terms of freedom of movement, occurring at the end of this year within Europe, the situation will be exacerbated. The challenge for us is developing a radical response.

EFCW TASKS

1. Establish a European movement to place value on children and deal with the following questions :

   * How do we translate the UN Convention into action?

   * How do we influence European child protection policy, legislation and practice?

   * How do we share with each other experience of good practice for preventing violence against children?

   * How can we empower them to prevent violent?

   * How can we influence the debate over the use of violence as a means of punishment?

2. When positive intervention does not prevent violence against children, can we :

   * devise positive systems for dealing with complaints?

   * establish what levels of serious violence exist in member countries, as well as the measures that exist to reduce violence?

   * establish how existing knowledge and skills can be transferred from those dealing professionally with offenders responsible for adult violence to child protection services, to help differentiate between families living in poverty, or under stress, and those who are simply dangerous.

SESSION II

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Chair : Rita Swinnen
Bernard van Leer Foundation
The Netherlands

Speakers : Marion Flett
Director, Young Families Now, Scotland

Carmen Treppte
Project Co-ordinator, Turkishe Kinder
Germany

Alberto Melo
Project Director, RADIAL, Portugal

INTRODUCTION

Rita Swinnen, Bernard van Leer Foundation

1. The overall theme being "Children's Rights in Europe", the right to education seemed to be a pertinent issue to address in the EFCW meeting. Since education as such would have been a too broad issue to handle, a sharper focus was needed. At the Brussels meeting in February 1991, one of the important themes that emerged from the discussions was "early childhood care and education", and this theme was selected as being a priority for the Hamburg meeting. A Programme Specialist of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the person in charge of the organisation of this session, invited from the Foundation's Network three resource persons, working directly with young children and families living in disadvantaged communities. They talked not only about their specific project work, but they were able to put the project developments into a broader European context in addressing themes not only relevant in their local or national setting, but also in other European countries.

2. The first speaker, Mrs Marion Flett from Aberdeen University (Scotland) presented a paper on "**community based early childhood care and education : a two generational approach**". She is directing a project called Young Families Now. It is based in the Torry area (Aberdeen), a once traditional close-knit community that has undergone rapid social change over the last twenty years with the decline in the fishing industry. The focus of the work is on developing wider educational opportunities for children and their parents. The project team supports informal groups for mothers and children to meet and play together. In response to the many interests and needs identified by the users, the project has created a number of adult groups, with child care provision, believing that time apart is both valuable in itself and often enhances time together for mothers and children. These play sessions and also regular open creches are staffed by local mothers who bring their own wealth of experience to the job and through training programmes develop their job skills further. Another aim is to bring together parents and professionals to look at new ways of working and to open up the discussion on how local child care services in health, social work and education can better meet the changing needs of young families. It is an action-research project which tries to bring together the community's expertise in developing an action programme with the University's expertise in carrying out research.

Marion Flett particularly stressed the point that mothers and children in poor communities deserve better levels of support than they currently enjoy whether it comes from informal support networks or statutory systems. Ultimately, it is not structures which will effect change, but people themselves. Working to support families in disadvantaged communities, not from a deficit perspective, but from the more positive perspective of empowerment in the sense of a capacitating process, will enable children to survive and thrive.

3. The second subject, "**multicultural approaches in education**", was introduced by Ms Carmen Treppte, Co-ordinator of the project Turkish children and mothers. The project is located in Gelsenkirchen, a town in the industrial area of the Ruhr Valley in Nordrhein Westfalen (Germany). The project is based in the premises of a primary school in a marginalized area of the town. The unemployment rate is above town average and dependence on social welfare is on the increase. More and more, German children come from broken families. The percentage of the non-German population - mainly migrants from Turkey and refugees from Lebanon - is twice as high as the town average. The project has responded to the educational needs of the children by emphasizing the importance of the families' own cultural backgrounds. The team has pursued a strong contextual approach in that it has been guided by the needs and interests of the changing population. Today, the school is a centre where regardless of their ethnic, national or religious background, children as well as parents find opportunities to contact others, to take part in school life and to find opportunities to learn. Everyday life in a multicultural situation also implies conflicts and search for conflict resolution. Carmen Treppte strongly argued that multicultural education cannot be reduced to a one-sided process of improving a minority's chances to adjust to a status quo. It is about changing "white" attitudes just as well and perhaps more than anything else. The dissemination of project experiences involves a process of becoming aware of cultural differences; generic characteristics of professional work that might be inadequate in a multicultural context; and one's own racist attitudes, beliefs and feelings, unintentional as they might be. Practitioners in the field of education often have to face the fact that they cannot change structural causalities which have to be dealt with on a political and economical level. Still, in a given microcosm, innovative approaches in multicultural education can achieve a lot. Among other things a growing awareness that what happens in multicultural everyday situations is not so much a question of incompatible differences between human beings, but the result of an unequal distribution of resources going "hand-in-hand" with a consequent lack of organised long-term planning.

4. The third speaker, Mr Alberto Melo, Project Director, tackled the issue of **"early child care and education and community development in the rural areas"** from the perspective of the experiences of the RADIAL project operating in the Algarve region (Portugal). "Human desertification" is taking place in this region, not on the coastal strip but inland in the mountains. It means rural depopulation on a massive scale, the abandonment of small holdings and villages, a process in which the closure of rural primary schools has a large part to play. The project works in many ways, all of which can be called educational. RADIAL (Rede de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Integrado do Algarve) is the Support Network for Children and Community Development in the Algarve. By setting up Children's Houses (casa de crianças) in four communities and training local people to run these, the project has initiated a new pattern of social investment in the area's future. At the same time, training in craft production : weaving, doll-making or tailoring, was to be offered in villages. The downward spiral of deprivation was to be reversed through work for women, children's centres and learning the principles of local control. The project's "learning by doing" approach has helped local people to understand in practice that they, their children and the communities represent a significant resource. The local community associations have now been linked in a Regional Forum and network to expand support from relevant local, regional and national groups. Although the core of RADIAL's work remains early childhood education with close parental involvement, the Associations have generated many sub-projects in response to local social, economic and cultural needs. These include setting up a toy-making workshop and out-of-school programmes for older siblings, building children's adventure playgrounds, creating theatre and arts opportunities for children and families, providing mobile support for children and families living in isolated hamlets and setting up small-scale income-generating schemes to provide local employment. RADIAL has set up a separate voluntary organisation, "In Loco" ("on the spot") to support the Associations and expand their work. "In Loco" has matured into a significant regional development body which has attracted European Community, national and regional support.

5. The discussion that followed was lively and centered around questions such as :

   - the importance of preparation for parenthood, the (in)effectiveness of special school programmes for adolescents, the benefits of experiential learning;

   - the crucial role of the rural areas for Europe;

- the position of immigrants and their children within our societies;
- the commonalities among the three projects and their multi-dimensional style of intervention;
- the underlying values and assumptions;
- the importance of the work being rooted in the community;
- low-cost aspects of intervention programmes geared towards prevention and development;
- capacitating people to control their own lives : empowerment;
- the role of the Funding Agency, the Bernard van Leer Foundation;
- the role of networking and sharing experiences.

COMMUNITY BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION : A TWO GENERATION APPROACH

Marion Flett

Introduction

In Scotland, as in the rest of the UK, those of us working in the field of early childhood provision are faced with a system based on a tradition of providing for young children's social, developmental and educational needs through different administrative channels. Thus nursery education, which is provided for children aged 3-5 largely on a part-time basis, is handled nationally and regionally by education departments; child care, still largely based on a welfare tradition, is provided for the poor and regulated, though not provided for everyone else by social work departments within a framework of national legislation and guidelines. Children are categorized according to whether they need "care" or not. Because provision is so scarce it has become the norm that only children who face the greatest need in terms of poverty, deprivation or family breakdown have access to public sector places. A lack of public commitment to good quality child care for its own sake has meant that over the last two decades there has been little investment in terms of resources, staffing or training in the kind of provision which would benefit all young children. We are left with a curious anomaly, therefore, that those who face the most severe problems in relation to their personal family circumstances very often enjoy the least benefit from having to attend the provision with the poorest facilities, the lowest levels of staffing, lack of resources and lack of educational input. People who can afford to be selective do not choose public sector provision for child care. Hence staff are not dealing with a social mix of children but with a group who, by definition, are the most stressed and with a range of pressing needs competing for attention. Thus we find ourselves in a position of providing poor services for poor people.

This is in no way to undermine either the commitment or the effort made by individual staff and carers to make the best quality provision within the constraints of the environment in which they find themselves. It is not good enough that the system in which they have to pursue their daily activities in providing a warm caring environment for disadvantaged youngsters does not acknowledge the value of their work or recognize the kinds of resources required to fulfil the job properly. It is indicative of our society's lack of concern about the needs of children and those who care for them, be they parents or care-givers. It also raises questions about the rights of children in terms of access to quality services which support their growth and development.

The development of nursery education was given a boost in this country as long ago as 1973 with the publication of the White Paper "Framework for Expansion" by the then Minister for Education, Margaret Thatcher. While nursery places were expanded following the implementation of this Act, the economic recession of the mid-1970s meant that it was only on a limited scale and generally on a part-time basis.

This means that children attend for two and one half hours only, either in the morning or afternoon. There are very few "full-time" places (covering a school day) although some effort has been made to locate those in the more disadvantaged areas. There was virtually no expansion at all of the number of places in the 1980s with the result that by 1989 only 28% of children aged 4 enjoyed a nursery education place before they started school at age 5. For younger children, the picture was even more limited with only 2% of under three's having a place in publicly funded day care. The expansion of child-minding services, ie family day care since the mid-1980s has been quite exceptionally increasing. This is now the main form of child care for children under 5 in Scotland, although it is not publicly funded or subsidized.

This account provides something of the flavour of the context in which we were working to try and ensure that not only the needs of children, but their right to a better start in life, were both recognized and addressed. Unfortunately, the development of services as described above had led to a situation where assumptions were made by both parents and professionals alike that educational provision was about meeting the needs of children while social work provision was about meeting the needs of parents. It is somewhat curious that the needs of children who spend their days in a nursery centre can be regarded as different because they came in through different doors. Indeed, a colleague, who works in the adult education field, said very recently : "I had never actually grasped the idea that creches could be about a quality experience for the children. I simply saw them as child care provision to support the adults engaged in their own educational activities". This point of view encapsulates very neatly the dilemmas and ambiguities faced by those working in the field where traditionally the needs of children and the needs of adults have been regarded as separate and distinct with different groups of professionals attempting to meet the needs of the two groups separately, while acknowledging the existence of the other group, but not a responsibility towards them.

In the work of the Young Families Now Project, over the last six years the approach has been quite different. We have argued that the needs of small children and their mothers are inextricably intertwined and, therefore, it does not make sense to adopt intervention strategies which appear to set

them in contradiction to one another. Drawing on the work of educators such as Bronfenbrenner (1974), Bruner (1980), Smith (1980), Tizard (1981), we recognized the value of supporting parents in their educational role in relation to their own young children. Like Filkin et al (1984), David (1984), Scarr & Dunn (1987), we came to realize that when we spoke about parents, essentially we meant mothers. In attempting to improve the learning opportunities for young children in a disadvantaged area of a Northern European city, we aimed to do so by offering parents better support in the good job they were already doing in very difficult circumstances. While not denying the problems which can arise in individual parent-child relationships, it was not the thrust of this project's work to deal with an individual pathology of family stress. Our focus was on the pressures created by the social environment of this community and how its strengths could be recognized and reinforced while acknowledging the tensions and stresses created by an infrastructure over which local people had very little control.

One of the problems facing working class women in these communities is the expectation that if only they can change their behaviour to be more like middle class or professional women, then much of the family stress can be alleviated. Children will enjoy more stimulating relationships in the home and will be better able to benefit from the educational opportunities available to them. Authors like David (1985), Finch (1983), Graham (1983) and Filkin (1984) have challenged this perspective, but it is still a powerful ideology within contemporary educational thinking.

Young families now : a two generational approach

Our approach was to suggest that it would be more positive to adopt a two generational approach to initiatives aimed at improving the opportunities available for young children and families. We were concerned to support parents, particularly mothers, in their role as primary educators of their own young children. We were also concerned, however, not to impose a double burden on women already hard pressed. Hence, it was important to recognize their needs in terms of development as individuals in their own right. By pursuing a developmental programme based on these principles we ensured that children benefited directly, mothers benefited directly and that both children and adults in families derived further gains from improvements in mothers' own self esteem, self image and status in her own eyes, as well as those around her.

The project team worked with local parents and professionals to identify what kinds of issues they wanted to address and to set up activities with parents outside the formal institutional structures. The starting point was always to accept the needs defined as important by local parents themselves, not what we thought should be the priorities.

Equal value was placed on the needs of both children and parents. Activities were focused on enabling mothers and children to spend time together in groups and to support and encourage them to enjoy time apart by sharing the caring. If women wanted to pursue their own interests then groups were organised to allow them to do so with child care provision alongside as an integral part of the planning. At the same time, regular open creches were organised where mothers were encouraged to leave their babies and small children to be cared for simply to give themselves a break from the constant round of domestic and child care responsibilities. For some women, this was the only opportunity they had to leave their child in the care of someone else, even for the brief period of two hours, secure in the knowledge that not only would their children be well cared for by properly trained staff, but that they need feel no burden of guilt about leaving them.

Provision for children

In the area where we worked there was already a comparatively high level of public early childhood care and education provision. The three primary schools in the area each had a nursery class attached offering part-time provision, ie morning or afternoon, and there was a nursery school providing full-time places. The majority of children in the area (over 90%) therefore enjoyed a year of part-time preschool provision at least before starting primary school. There was also a Social Work run Preschool Day Care Centre, later a Family Centre, which provided some child care for low income, single parent families, as well as family support services. There was little voluntary sector activity in the area although when the project began there were a couple of faltering mother and toddler groups which came and went somewhat according to the commitment and resourcefulness of one or two individual mothers.

Working in co-operation with these groups and the statutory agencies, the project supported a number of initiatives over the years, including an expanded number of mother and toddler groups in different locations throughout the area, a new mother and baby group for first time mothers, toy libraries, kindergym activities, mother and toddler swimming, and the open creches of course. All of these groups and activities provided opportunities for young children, particularly the youngest age group under three, to participate in and enjoy enriched learning experiences in group settings. As Malcolm Hill (1987) reminds us, it is interesting how many parents want improved opportunities for their children to be involved in group care because of the educational benefits which they perceive them to derive from such experiences.

The project was also instrumental in creating the settings which allowed parents to be more involved in the formal agencies through the setting up of family rooms and under-

fives rooms in the schools. These were very important developments in terms of acknowledging the place of smaller children in families where older children might be attending the nursery or school. They were also very important, however, in terms of involving parents in the formal education sector in such a way that they had a real voice. In all cases, it was parents who took the initiative in creating these family settings and in defining the programme of activities. Thus, for the formal agencies it was an important demonstration of how disadvantaged parents had much to contribute in the public arena in terms of a contribution to planning and decision-making. They could no longer be regarded simply as passive recipients of a service on offer.

Provision for adults

The above example illustrates how many initiatives undertaken by the project benefited both adults and children directly, while implicitly acknowledging that different needs of the two generations were being met. Thus with the family rooms for example, they provided better play facilities for young children and a place for families to meet. Much of the benefit for adults, however, lay in their involvement in the processes of negotiation and planning to ensure that the space was used productively for the different groups seeking access to it.

The most important dimension of this aspect of the work was the local management committee formed to bring together the interests of parents and professionals working in the area. In co-operation with the staff team, it was they who determined the shape of the project's programme of activities. They decided priorities within the overall budget framework and made decisions on the level of resources required by individual groups to pursue specific initiatives.

The Management Committee was important in two specific respects. Firstly, it contributed to the process of parents and professionals coming to a closer understanding of the pressures and constraints they faced in their different roles. This happened along a range of different dimensions. For professionals it reinforced the idea outlined above of parents having a contribution to make in terms of ideas, activities and planning. For parents, it enabled them to see professionals in a setting where they were not necessarily more skilled and to realize how little power many grassroots professionals have in their own systems. In creating a better understanding, therefore, both groups were able to consider how to realize more effectively their shared broad aims of improving services for children.

This leads to the second important strand of the Committee's work. The group as a whole came to realize how their efforts could best be combined to meet the needs of children.

They were only too well aware of the fragmented nature of the services on offer. They knew that because of scarce resources each individual or group had to devote much energy to system maintenance. There was little opportunity to consider the needs of the child as a whole person, or indeed, of families as coherent units. Thus by supporting the development of a body with some resources and decision-making powers, the project created the space for this group of people to articulate both their concerns for meeting the needs of children and strategies to address some of these needs. They were able to acknowledge the limitations on them imposed by structural and resource constraints. Yet within that environment positive initiatives could be taken to improve the quality of provision for children. They were also able to develop a role as an advocacy body for the place of young children in the community. The result has been the spread of ideas to other areas within the city and beyond.

The range of adult education opportunities developed through the project's community networks included child development sessions organised around the them of play, a useful starting point for many mothers who were interested to explore ways of encouraging their children's development. In response to local requests, groups, workshops and courses also took place on subjects as diverse as photography, cake decorating, jewellery making, screen printing, basic literacy and numeracy and healthy cooking/healthy eating. It sounds like a rather incoherent collection of unrelated topic based courses which could have been set up and provided by existing agencies. In one sense, this is true. The question remains as to why this had not happened and why young women had not previously been able to voice their demands so that their voices were heard. One reason for responding positively to all such requests was to reinforce for women the important of what they defined as being interesting to them. Working in a community development means listening to what people are saying and one way of demonstrating the listening is to respond positively to requests being made (Pantin, 1984).

It is also important to look behind what was happening in some of these groups : for example the cake decorating venture actually led to small scale income generation for women who were able to develop their hobby into a useful service for celebration occasions. The basic literacy and numeracy class on the other hand allowed mothers to support and encourage their children in their school work. The healthy cooking classes were part of an overall programme to encourage women to take their own health more seriously. Equally, their key role in maintaining the health of other family members was recognized. As in many of the other groups, the style of the healthy cooking classes meant that one important factor to emerge was the knowledge which women already possessed. Assumptions that they did not know what was good for their children to eat or that they were not interested in their

children's educational progress proved unfounded. All too often, there was simply no opportunity for them to express their own thoughts and ideas about the family matters they handled day-by-day (Phillips, 1983). Thus the adult education initiatives served two important functions. They did enable women to develop and extend existing skills and to participate in an enjoyable educational venture - a new experience for many of them. Similarly, they provided a vehicle for women to explore wider issues in relation to themselves, their families and the wider society. The job of professional staff was to support them in that process and encourage them to use their developing critical awareness (Freire, 1972) to consider future strategies for change.

The role of child care

As indicated above, one of the strategies which underpinned the support offered by the project to children and parents was to ensure the good quality child care was a key element of the programme. It was not part of our job to make alternative provision, but rather to offer a complementary service where the need was greatest - for the under threes. One of the ways of raising the status of child care was to employ local mothers as creche workers, properly paid and with training provided. Not surprisingly we discovered that many women were able to use their own skills and expertise in providing a warm, happy, safe and stimulating environment for small children. It is clear that there are skills required and we saw it as being very important that women were paid in line with other part-time workers in the public sector working with children or young people. The training required related mainly to group organisational skills, structuring a programme and working in a team. At the same time extending their knowledge of child development and devising age-appropriate activities for children have also played an important role in the training and support of child care workers.

The project also provided a direct training input to local child minders who provide family day care for the children of working parents. These workers, while registered with the Social Work department, have no other relationship with them. The agreement is made with individual parents and they operate in effect as self-employed contractors. By forming a support group locally, the project demonstrated means by which they could support one another, break down the isolation which can be one disadvantage of a home based job, share resources like baby equipment when required and provide an enriched learning environment for the children in their care. Training on specific aspects of their role has been a key feature of the support for this group in response to requests made by them and always with a view to improving the quality of care.

By concentrating on the specific aspects of good quality child care, the project team was able to support local women to "acknowledge the knowledge" they possess; to define some of the shills which they put into effect as mothers; to confront the issue of the pleasure and enjoyment of children being offset by the boredom and frustration of many child care tasks (Oakley, 1974). We found that for many women in this "disadvantaged" area their children's well-being was of overriding concern to them. They pursued their own interests only when they felt that their children were being well cared for. Often, the very presence of their children provided a legitimacy for their interests : for example, the group where a staff member tried to initiate a separate discussion group with creche provision alongside. It never got started, a) because the creche provision created space for the women to fulfil other tasks, and b) because the women felt comfortable in the group discussion only when the focus of the group was the play session for the children. The adult education experience had to continue to run alongside.

Parent education

It may seem rather surprising that very little has been said so far about the concept of parent education, especially given its current popularity as a strategy for dealing with all kinds of family problems, behavioural, emotional, social, economic. Indeed, at the outset of the project there appeared to be a resonance with what we were seeking to achieve in terms of developing learning opportunities for young children through support for parents, particularly mothers. Yet, increasingly we became disillusioned about the concept itself, particularly as it has come to be debased in the British context generally and in our own particularly by the reference to the term "parenting skills". It is very difficult to define what these particular skills are (David, 1986) apart from mundane child care tasks on the one hand, or improved knowledge of child development on the other. However, evidence from child care experts indicates only too painfully that this is not a prescription for anyone to be a better parent. The women we worked with did not require "parenting skills". They were being mothers (Gieve, 1989) doing the best for their children with all the ambiguities implied (Boulton, 1983). Their qualities as parents were not lacking, but undervalued and unacknowledged. They lacked good quality housing, incomes of a reasonable level, amenities in the area and social support systems.

The strength of a community based initiative lies in its breadth of focus. Many professionals, such as doctors, social workers or speech therapists for example, see families when a problem is being presented. Others, such as health visitors and nursery nurses, work in institutional context where priorities are determined by families in need. It is understandable, therefore, that a deficit model of parenting has gained

considerable credibility as an explanatory model for problems faced by children. A broadly based educational approach, however, allows for a more open perspective, recognizing shared knowledge and experience and the need to develop our skills both as parents and professionals (Scarr and Dunn, 1987).

We found a real problem to be the failure to distinguish between parents in their respective roles as mothers and fathers. Gender blindness in this respect confirms the point made by David (1986) that one of the dangers of parent education is that it provides a vehicle for a form of social control over women. Our awareness of this dilemma was sharpened by the recognition that by according a value and status to motherhood, we were always in danger of reinforcing the sex role stereotypes of women. In a project where education was seen as an instrument for liberation, clearly this posed a challenge in terms of both methods of working and the content of the discussion.

Our experience in the project in relation to the participation of parents confirmed what was becoming more widely acknowledged in society. The majority of the adults with major or sole responsibility for child care are women. Nine out of ten single "parent" families are headed by women (Family Policy Studies Centre, 1989). "Fatherhood" and "motherhood" have different meanings for parents and for professionals who work with them. "Work" has different meaning for men and women both in terms of paid employment outside the home and domestic responsibilities (Moss, 1990). The power relations as worked out between men and women. (Dobash, 1990; Taking Liberties Collective, 1989). The role of women in families and in the wider world is changing rapidly with consequences for all family members. Finally, it is important to remind ourselves that when we refer to parent participation, the parents concerned are largely women and in the public, voluntary or grant-aided sector, the reality is that many of those parents are working class women living in poverty.

In their recent study on partnership, Pugh & De'Ath (1989) make no reference at all to the issues of which parents they are talking about in relation to "parent involvement" or "working parents". We have no idea if the majority are women, although on present evidence it is fair to make that assumption. Yet, by their failure to make the distinction between mothers and fathers, we are left with an incomplete picture of the issues arising. There is little contribution to our understanding of the parent-professional relationships, for example, because gender is a powerful determinant of how those relationships are structured. By contrast, putting "Women and Children First", the account of the Home Link project in Liverpool (Filkin et al, 1984) provides an analysis of the way in which women's dependence on the Welfare State can reinforce their sense of personal failure and increase a sense of inadequacy rather than support them in the job of being a parent

in difficult circumstances. Peter Moss (1990) argues that we are now facing a dilemma in national terms because of the so-called "demographic time bomb" and the need for expansion in child care services. The quality of service for users and the quality of life for families is threatened because of our refusal to acknowledge that the allocation of work and domestic commitments are issues for women, for men and ultimately for children. Unless we are clear about the needs of all three groups and the need for change in both the workplace and the home, families are going to suffer from increasingly high levels of stress. The most vulnerable, those in low income jobs with poor working conditions and little control over them will continue to experience the greatest levels of stress, thereby disadvantaging children further. The idea of "parent" education in such circumstances has a rather hollow ring to it. Women are already arguing for better child care facilities. What gives cause for concern is men's absence from this arena as an important focus for the discussion in meeting their needs. The significance of the absence of men in the field is brought into sharp focus by their power in terms of decision-making.

The rights of the child and community empowerment

We would argue from the perspective of a community based project that the rights of the child are best acknowledged and reinforced through the efforts to meet the needs of the two generations : children and parents. It is not the job of neighbourhood projects like ours, nor indeed of professionals generally to save children from feckless or inadequate parents. Nor is it their job to attempt to make people better parents. People can only operate effectively in their parental role or indeed in their wider family roles as the people they are. This is not to suggest that behaviour cannot be changed nor that certain types of behaviour are unacceptable. Professional intervention is then legitimate and there must be clearly established guidelines to indicate when this is the case and what procedures must be followed to protect vulnerable children. The limits of acceptable behaviour have to be defined by debate within the wider society and agreed within a framework of cultural values as well as within a legislative code which determines the sanctions to be used where adults fail in their responsibilities to children.

We work in a style which accords respect to differing cultural norms and values. Thus our practice seeks to be anti-discriminatory as regards characteristics of race, gender and disability. We still have a long way to go in confronting our own prejudices and ensuring that all members of the community are valued for themselves. Yet it is important to challenge some of the accepted practices if we are to acknowledge the rights of all children in terms of their access to educational opportunities for example. Hence, we persuaded the staff in one local school to drop the idea of a "black book" where the

names of naughty children were inscribed. We have tried to ensure equal access to playground space for girls so that boys' football does not dominate all the time. This has been less successful. We have introduced a more varied range of multicultural books, materials and resources into the groups we support. We have tried to ensure that the few ethnic minority families who live in the neighbourhood for a period of time receive appropriate social, emotional and educational support which meets the needs of children and parents.

The power of relationships between parents and professionals also need to be acknowledged as an important dimension in the work. This is an arena in which the dynamics of oppression are worked out often by women themselves in relation to other women. Thus, for example, professional staff felt able to comment on aspects of motherhood based on their personal experience. They failed to appreciate that their comments would be perceived as deriving from their professional authority and thereby accorded a greater status and legitimacy. Making judgments about other women's abilities as mothers can be an effective means of social control by professionals (David, 1986a). It is a danger in community projects as much as it is in traditional institutions or services. Individual professionals generally want to ensure a high standard of service. The lines between legitimate professional expertise and the attitudes and values implicit in different approaches to mothering can easily become blurred.

Yet, as Tizard and Hughes (1984) remind us, the home still provides a rich learning environment for young children because the context is that of everyday living. The challenge for professionals in the school setting is to foster, harness and satisfy the enquiring minds which children demonstrate so clearly at home. Thus children are encouraged to develop their intellectual capacities and improve their communication skills in settings which are not context specific. Thus, in the best interests of the child, teachers need to consider what they can learn from parents about the skills and aptitudes which children already possess. There needs to be as much emphasis on teachers learning from parents as vice versa.

By establishing this kind of partnership between parents and professionals, then parents - particularly those in disadvantaged areas - can no longer be viewed in the same stereotyped way. Rather, they are more powerful figures who are legitimately concerned to ensure that the services provided function in the best interests of their children. Their role as the primary educators of their own young children needs to be valued and acknowledged, not only by members of staff in projects like Young Families Now, but by the professional educators with whom they come into contact.

Parent empowerment, however, is not synonymous with, nor does it necessarily lead to community empowerment. The dilemma for projects is that through the enabling process, people do move on and follow up their own interests, a progression which is actively encouraged. But there are implications for both the staff team and the community itself. We recognized early on that there was a cyclical dimension to much of the project's work as new mothers and babies appeared at groups and the more confident, articulate women moved through a range of groups as their children got older and pursued their own interests through jobs or further education activities. For one or two that sense of satisfaction will be obtained through continuing involvement in either a voluntary or paid capacity in community based activities. But for the majority, there is a need to move on and move out to establish their own sense of identity more firmly. It is by this means that the personal development of individuals is ultimately manifested in a community with a stronger sense of identity and commitment to development. Many will discover that their neighbourhood is no longer necessarily synonymous with community but in Wolmott's (1989) words, their "community of attachment" may actually cover a number of different constellations of other individuals and interests. They may find they can identify more strongly with those who share a work interest or educational interest or campaigning interest round a particular theme. These are the focus of concern and in turn contributes to strengthening and enriching the life of the community in which people live.

Thus, education for mothers and children, based on a two generational approach, facilitates the process of enabling women to participate fully in the lives of both the local community or neighbourhood and wider communities - geographic, social and interest, of which they are also a part. The empowerment process relates to their ability to identify needs; to recognize and articulate the stresses and pressures in their lives; to be able to utilize more effectively the facilities, services and resources available to them. They can operate more effectively as parents building on a knowledge base which they already have to maximize the opportunities for themselves and their children. If institutions do not meet their needs, they are in a position to decide the extent to which they want to challenge that. The "sense of community", therefore, is not necessarily manifested in direct campaigning, fundraising or pressure groups as such, but in the ability firstly to demand and secondly make better use of services. We would argue that the processes involved reflect a developmental rather than consumerist or service centred model. It is in this sense that they can be said to be part of a broader empowerment process. The linear progression from children to families to community empowerment is too simplistic.

Mothers and children in poor communities deserve better levels of support than they currently enjoy whether it comes from families, informal networks of neighbours and friends, the local community or statutory systems. Ultimately it is not structures which will effect change but people themselves. Empowerment in this sense is about a capacitating process rather than one worked out in terms of domination by particular interest groups (Lassen, 1988; Land, 1989; Cockburn, 1991).

Working to support families in disadvantaged communities, not from a deficit perspective but from the more positive perspective of empowerment will enable children to survive and thrive. The American author, Liesbeth Schoor reminds us that we know how to do it. We require both the political will and commitment to do so as well as professional intervention. Yet, we also require to relinquish some of our power as professionals if the oppressed people with whom we work are to have more power over their own lives. Are we prepared to face that challenge?

MULTICULTURAL APPROACHES IN EDUCATION

Carmen Treppte

When, in 1744, white settlers in Virginia renewed their offer to receive a group of Native American children and have them educated, the spokesman of the Iroquois nation opposed firmly to the proposition, claiming that the first group of children they had sent to the white man's school came back to their tribe knowing all sorts of things except what was needed to survive in their traditional environment : they were useless as runners, unable to endure hunger and cold, they did not have the slightest idea how to build a hut and were completely unqualified for hunting. In a word, they were absolutely hopeless. And yet, the spokesman went on, the Iroquois were basically willing to co-operate. To show their appreciation, they proposed that for a change the Virginian settlers should send a dozen of their youngsters to have them education by the Iroquois.[1]

Even today - nearly 250 years later - the anecdote sounds symptomatic. Symptomatic of the problems children are facing when traditions and priorities of the home differ from those of the school. Symptomatic also of a multicultural situation in which only one side has the power to impose its standards. Of course, the Virginian settlers never sent their sons. If, however, pluralism does not go hand-in-hand with equality, ethnicity is likely to become a variable of social stratification.

Multicultural or intercultural education respectively has for quite a long time been a topic of discussion among professionals who work with children of ethnic minorities. Recently, the concept of intercultural education in a multicultural society has been gaining more general ground. For some of its advocates, it is a priority to promote the development of a global European spirit, to others it seems to be a remedy for solving increasing conflicts concerning migrants and refugees in their "host" society. If multicultural society is a fact we have to face whether we like it or not, strategies are needed to enable its members to live - if not in harmony, at least in peace - regardless of their ethnic, national or religious background. Often enough, concepts hiding behind an emphatical slogan lack a certain clarity. To some multicultural education seems to be an additional subject that should be introduced in the school curriculum, to others it is rather a life style with underlying principles that can and should be implemented in any educational situation. Some approaches turn out to bear a sophisticated hidden potential for the assimilation and political neutralization of minority groups. Are we talking about an approach which aims at improving a

minority's ability of meeting the standards of the majority? Or are we also expecting the majority to reconsider its presuppositions? Some who in line with a post-modern disposition plead for overall cultural relativism might get stuck considering seemingly culture-bound values and behavour patterns which are suspected of being incompatible with the achievements of Enlightenment. "Shouldn't there be limits?" some will say at this point. "Just think of the Rushdie affair! Don't we in fact need a certain amount of eurocentrism? It's not that we like to be chauvinistic, but isn't our's the best of all possible or at least existing worlds?"

"One of the central myths of the modern period in the West", Richard Shweder writes in a book on cultural psychology, "is the idea that the opposition between religious-superstition-revelation and logic-science-rationality divides the world into then and now, them and us. According to this myth, the world woke up and became good about three centuries ago when Enlightenment thinkers began to draw some distinctions between things that premodern thinkers had managed to overlook."[2]

There is some ground for doubt indeed. Thinking of the domestication of European women and the colonization of other peoples, it would appear that not everybody was meant to gain from the achievements of Enlightenment. Which does not necessarily mean that Enlightenment was bad, but at least that to really achieve distinct but equal status for everybody still is a distant option requiring a careful reconsideration of our thinking, as well as the development of new strategies that might be adequate to transform vision into future action.

At this stage, experiences in the microcosm of a project working with members of disadvantaged ethnic minorities might be of help.

The project

The project, Turkish children and mothers, was initiated by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the Freudenberg Foundation six years ago. It is located in Gelsenkirchen, a town in the industrial area of the "Ruhr-Valley" in Northrhine-Westfalia. The project is based in the premises of a primary school in a marginalized area of the town. Unemployment rate is above town average, dependence on social welfare is on the increase. More and more German children come from broken families. The percentage of the non-Germany population - mainly migrants from Turkey and refugees from Lebanon - is twice as high as the town average. Deprived (ethnic) groups compete with one another for economic rewards - scapegoating and inter-ethnic conflicts are likely to occur.

In areas like the one described lack of preschool facilities for non-German children are a typical feature thus programming minority children for future failure once they enter school without previous preparation.

It was against this backdrop that the project started to act, the point of departure being the organisation of groups for 5-year old children in order to further them with regard to linguistic, motor and cognitive abilities, as well as with respect to social behaviour for one year before school entry.

The children

5-year old Ahmet is of Kurdish origin and was born in Lebanon during the civil war. After leaving Beirut to escape from the war, the family settled in a house near our school with Lebanese residents only, a Turkish mosque on the ground floor, a view of the railway line dividing the backyards of the area and the coal mine right in front of the house. Most of the families living in the street come from Turkey and have been watching the "Arab invasion" with a frown ever since refugees started to move in. Though to the not too numerous German neighbours both communities look more or less the same, it is evident that on both sides even those who never heard much of the Ottoman Empire and do not have a specific knowledge of the proceedings of the First World War, are pretty sure that "those people over there are not our friends".

In spite of this hardly inviting environment and notwithstanding numerous problems with the administrative machinery of refugee custody, Ahmet's mother is happy to live in a situation that to others might look scarcely favourable. At least, she says in a radio interview, there is no bombing. Her children will go to school and be able to learn. Though she has no school experience herself, she shows high respect for any kind of formal education that hopefully will be of benefit to others. The teachers of the oldest daughter, however, perceive the mother as indifferent to school affairs and careless about her offspring's problems : a mother who like so many others is insensitive to what can be expected of co-operative parents who support their children in becoming school achievers.

Of her reputation, the mother knows little. It never came to her mind that school achievement might be her business as well : of course professionals know better and "our sort does not have much of a chance anyway". At the age of 5, Ahmet does not speak a single word of German, sophisticated playing material is to be looked for in vain in the house, and to the family the best way to keep Ahmet quiet and soothe his temporary aggressive disposition is to let him watch his favourite "Rambo" video as often as possible. "All this blood, you know", the sister comments, "it reminds him of back home".

Mother involvement

All the children and parents making use of the project have a specific story to tell. Usually, however, a life history that fits European middle-class biased views of what child development should look like, is not to be found in the group. It is obvious that more often than not "life styles" (which involve allocation of resources) of professionals like educators, social workers and teachers, and those of their "clients", are miles apart. Professional unawareness of the fact easily leads to what J Rennie called one of the "educational ghosts"[3] : the notion of incompetent parents not interested in the child's achievement and unwilling to cooperate. A misinterpretation that all too easily leads to mechanisms through which school tends to perpetuate inequality.

Mother involvement is particularly emphasized by the project. In order to prevent alienation processes within the family and to break the cycle of deprivation by increasing the mothers' support and competence for the benefit of their children, mothers are drawn into the work with the children. Mother involvement also means to encourage women to take a second chance for themselves by identifying their needs and taking advantage of further education opportunities for themselves. For many of the mothers concerned, the daily walk to the project is the first step out of a long period of isolation and it is usually only after a period of strengthening their own self-assurance that women are prepared to show interest in the work with their children.

The project's activities react to specific needs of ethnic minorities within the catchment zone of the cooperating school. The project, however, is not a hothouse to generate "exotics" and activities are not meant to be exclusive. Literacy courses, Germany language lessons, sewing and cooking groups, informal meetings and work parties for Turkish and Arab mothers today are integrated in a programme the school developed in the course of the years based on principles of multicultural and community education. Today, the school is a center where regardless of their ethnic, national or religious background, children as well as parents find opportunities to contact others, to take part in school life and to find opportunities to learn. It was in the mother-and-child group that Ahmet's mother slowly started to give up her conviction that she would never be able to learn for herself. At the same time Turkish mothers decided to reconsider their perception of "these dirty Arabs". And while Ahmet's mother still prefers to attend a weekly tea party of Arab ladies only, some of the others started to look out for new horizons together with German mothers, thus coming to the astonishing conclusion that one can have a lot in common with people whose cultural background at first seemed to be "so very different" from one's own.

In the beginning, we had no difficulty in defining the project's target group : Turkish children and mothers, of course. Today, we are not so sure. In fact, all of us became learners in the course of a process which not only had consequences in the classroom, but also for inter-ethnic relations outside school. For the staff as well as its co-operating partners, this implied growing awareness and modifications of the professional role.[4] "Partnership", "empathy", "negotiation", "empowerment" are the well known keywords concerned. When trying to transform theory into action, the project team had to face the fact that first of all it had to stop "preaching" and learn to listen carefully to what people had to say. Consequently, migrant and refugee mothers were not the only ones who underwent change as they were not the only ones questioning their most basic assumptions.

A quest for methods

A quest for adequate methods has to take into account specific needs of the ethnic minorities concerned. To react to lacking preschool facilities is one thing. The way you do it demands careful additional consideration. In our case a climate had to be established in which people can feel at home, the setting has to be compatible with traditional standards of female chastity, communication patterns are familiar. It is only when people feel accepted instead of being with their back to the wall that they can develop a concept of potential change - to the extent they think appropriate to their individual situation and at a speed they think they can cope with.

A quest for methods implies information about culture bound values and behaviour patterns, as well as a knowledge of political, social and economic forces on minority groups. It implies acceptance of differences without making children and parents "hostages tied to a particular culture as a result of their ethnic origin".[5] Cultures are not unchangeable and impermeable entities and there should be individual option in the dynamics between personal and social identity.

Where members of what have been called "egocentric" and "sociocentric" societies (which both have their costs and their benefits) are confronted with each other's concepts of reality[6], conflicts are likely to occur.

The outcome of multicultural education is often somewhat mysteriously described as an experience of mutual enrichment. This, however, does not mean an accumulation of folkloristic artifacts in terms of exotic food and Turkish folkdance groups.[7]

Everyday life in a multicultural situation like the one outlined above also implies conflicts and search for conflict resolution, mediation and compromising. It is a process in which we can learn about the other only if we are willing to learn more about ourselves. Being based on dialogue, it can be "an act of criticism and liberation, as well as of discovery".[8]

Long before the school started to initiate a dialogue between the churches and the mosque represented in the area, a group of Turkish women decided to take part in a Catholic church congregation. On coming out, one of them said : "You know, I never quite believed what people are saying about Christians. But Now? I couldn't believe my ears! These folks do pray to three different Gods at a time. It's really shocking, don't you think?"

To see oneself reflected in the mirror of another culture's intentional world can be amusing as well as irritating. The embarrassment we are likely to feel in such moments can be a revelation and sensitize us for everyday communication patterns which constantly put members of ethnic minorities under pressure to defend or justify their "strange, exotic customs". Can we really be sure that our interpretation of other people's values or behaviour patterns is more adequate than the other way round? German project visitors tend to take it for granted that women who cover their hair are suppressed and those who don't are liberated. The women concerned sometimes feel hurt by the labelling process in which they do not have a say. Sometimes they just laugh whole-heartedly. It might be of help to bear in mind that as Lawrence of Arabia wrote in his famous book, a lot of his Arab fellow combatants thought the British habit of wearing hats had to do with the sinful bearers' futile attempt to protect their guilty eyes from meeting the reproachful gaze of God.[9]

Intercultural relations can be irritating. Being based on dialogue, however, they offer vast opportunities for a self-reflexive, open-ended process in the course of which we can learn as much about ourselves as maybe about other cultures.

Multicultural education

During an in-service training session in a neighbouring town, one of the teachers present asked : "By the way, do you ever manage to diminish the suppression of Turkish women? I mean, headscarves and all that?" - "What makes you think all Turkish women are suppressed?" - "Oh, come on, you can't fool me. I have a Turkish boy in my class. His mother is not even allowed to leave the house!" - "Did the mother tell you this is the way she feels?" "What do you mean, did she tell me? You know pretty well they are not allowed to talk!"

It is commonplace knowledge in social sciences that we need generalizations to reduce complexity and make everyday life cognitively manageable. If, however, they are not open to "change and challenge", they easily become stereotypes : "impervious to logic and experience".[10]

When a black psychiatrist in the US asked the National Institute of Mental Health to set up an institute or task force to study racism or white supremacy, he was told : "... we will set up an institute to study minority groups. In other words, " we won't study ourselves, but we will study you"."[11]

Again, the response is symptomatic. In training sessions it often seems to be a commonly shared belief that the one-sided accumulation of knowledge about minority groups is the appropriate step to take. And who else could be better prepared for that than Europeans looking back on a long tradition of exploring and evaluating other cultures?[12]

We should not, however, abstain from the fact that this tradition belongs to the context of European expansion and colonization of other peoples. More often than not, our knowledge accumulated on the way is biased. Philosophers like Immanuel Kant, David Hume and many others believed in white supremacy; Victorian sage Thomas Carlyle wrote about what he called "the Nigger" : "The Almighty Maker has appointed him to be a Servant".[13] Images of the "barbarian", "lascivious" and "indolent" Turk and Arab prevail just as well.[14]

Stereotypes of one-sided "intercultural relationships" can be traced down to children's rhymes, adventure books, comics and other media we dealt with in the course of our socialization. And is it really an exaggeration to think that even we as professionals of best intentions sometimes tend to behave like an incarnation of Robinson Crusoe trying to civilize the "savage"?

On this basis, additional information about a minority's cultural background tends to confirm preconceived notions rather than provoking attitude change on either side. The more so, since stereotyping does not allow to perceive individual differences and the strengths and resources members of a given minority have to offer. In this respect, multicultural education cannot be reduced to a one-sided process of improving a minority's chances to adjust to a status quo. It is about changing "white" attitudes just as well and perhaps more than anything else.

Before this background, the dissemination of our project experiences involves a process of becoming aware of :

- cultural differences;

- generic characteristics of professional work that might be inadequate in a multicultural context;

- one's own racist attitudes, beliefs and feelings, unintentional as they might be.

Due to one of the numerous surprises social bureaucracy has ready for the innocent observer, the catchment zone of a day care centre was cleared of its marginal German population, the families having been given new housing in the course of a reintegration programme. Instead, refugee families are sent to live in the area. Practically overnight, the German staff of the centre is confronted with a rather unique situation : there are children from all over the world who neither understand each other nor the educators. Describing her work, one of the educators says : "You know, there is this family from Zaire. I mean, these people come right out of the bush. No civilization, nothing! Luckily, I know some French, so there is at least some communication possible with the parents".

Basically, the educators were left alone, feeling they could neither cope with their own occupational role nor with the problems of the families coming to the centre. One might wonder about the concept of "civilization" presented in the example and how people manage to learn French in a place where there is "nothing". Working at a growing awareness of learned racist attitudes, however, is one thing. The underlying structure in the situation described, another. Practitioners in the field of education often have to face the fact that they cannot change structural causalities which have to be dealt with on a political and economical level. Instead, they might find themselves being misused for surface treatment. Of course a Turkish tea party in Germany does not put an end to restrictive legislation and positive examples of refugee work at present are not a campaign issue. Still, in a given microcosm, innovative approaches in multicultural education can achieve a lot. Among other things a growing awareness of minority, as well as majority, members that what happens in multicultural everyday situations often is not so much a question of incompatible differences between human beings, but the result of an unequal distribution of resources going hand-in-hand with a consequent lack of organised long-term planning.

NOTES

1. See C Feest, Das rote Amerika, Wien 1976, S. 187f.

2. R A Shweder, Thinking through Cultures. Expeditions in Cultural Psychology, Cambridge/Mass./London 1991, p2.

3. J Rennie (ed), British Community Schools. Four Case Studies, London/Philadelphia 1985, p10.

4. See Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Parent as Prime Educator : Changing Patterns of Parenthood. Fourth Western Hemisphere Seminar with the co-operation of the Ministry of Education, Republic of Peru, Lima, Peru 7-16 May 1986; J Bastiani, Ideology versus Lay Experience. In : G Allen/ J Bastiani/I Martin/K Richards (eds), Community Education. An Agenda for Educational Reform, Milton Keynes/ Philadelphia 1987 : 175-192.

5. CERI, One School, Many Cultures, Paris (OECD) 1989, p21.

6. R A Shweder, 1991, p154.

7. K Parker, The Revelation of Caliban. "The Black Presence" in the classroom. In : D Gill/B Mayor/M Blair (eds), Racism and Education. Structures and Strategies, London 1992 : 284-302, P297.

8. R A Shweder, 1991, p110.

9. T E Lawrence, Die sieben Säulen der Weisheit, München 1978, p105f.

10. D W Sue/D Sue, Counseling the Culturally Different. Theory and Practice. New York, etc., 1990, p47f.

11. See M Weinberg, A Historical Framework for Multicultural Education. In : D E Cross/G C Baker/L J Stiles (eds), Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Perspectives and Professional Strategies, New York/London 1977: 17-32, p17.

12. CERI, 1989, p17f.

13. K Parker, 1992, p290.

14. See E W Said, Orientalism, London 1978; R Kabbani, Europe's Myths of Orient, London 1988; R Schiffer, Turkey Romanticized. Images of the Turks in Early 19 Century English Travel Literature, Bochum 1982.

SESSION III

CHANGES IN MEDIA USE

AND

CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO GOOD INFORMATION

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1. Children's right to good information

1.1. According to Article 17 of the Convention of the rights of the child:
- children should be protected from information injurious to their well-being
- mass media should be encouraged to disseminate information that furthers children's well-being

1.2. This paper focusses on the contribution of media to
- children's knowledge
- and cognitive development

1.3. The paper analyzes:
- changes that, since the advent of TV, occurred in media use and the informative functions of mass media
- possible effects of these changes on
  - children's knowledge
  - and cognitive development

2. Five points will be addressed:

2.1. Changes in time spent on media use since the coming of TV in the Netherlands (1955)

2.2. Effects of the rise of TV on the decline in use found for other media

2.3. Changes in:
- information supplied by the med a
- and the degree to which the media-provided information is actually consumed

2.4. Strengths and weaknesses of media as information-providers

2.5. Consequences for children's information level and cognitive development

3. Changes in time spent on media since 1955

MEDIA USE IN HOURS PER WEEK
FOR THE DUTCH POPULATION

	Evenings + weekend			Full week	
Medium	1955	1975	1990	1975	1990
TV	0,2	10,1	10,9	10,2	11,9
Radio	3,2	1,3	0,7	2,2	1,2
Books	2,4	1,0	1,0	1,6	1,5
Newspapers	2,0	1,4	1,1	2,5	2,2
Magazines	0,7	1,2	0,9	2,0	1,4

3.1. Viewing time has increased considerably, especially between 1955 and 1975

3.2. Amount of time spent listening has at least halved over the past thirty years

3.3. Reading time is declining, too, especially the time spent reading books and newspapers

3.4. The reading/viewing ratio has changed from 27 (1955) to 0,43 (1990), and to 0,25 (1990) for young people

4. Effects of the introduction of TV on the amount of time spent on other media

4.1. Effects on the amount of time spent listening to the radio

PERCENTAGE OF LEISURE TIME SPENT ON 'PRIMARY' LISTENING, FOR PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT A TV SET AT HOME

		1962	
	1955	No TV	TV
Males	13	13	4
Females	13	13	4

4.2. Effects on the amount of time spent reading
Effects of the introduction of TV

PERCENTAGE OF LEISURE TIME SPENT READING, FOR PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT A TV SET

		1962	
	1955	No TV	TV
Males	22	22	14
Females	22	20	11

Effects of the introduction of afternoon-TV broadcasts (1980 - 1985)

- Introduction of afternoon-TV led to a decrease in reading time, especially among:
  - TV generations
  - people with little education

- Confirming McLuhan's prediction that TV will primarily displace reading among
  - young people who have been brought up with TV
  - low-SES people

- The displacement effect was limited to:
  - book reading
  - newspaper reading

4.3. Conclusions

- The rise of TV is responsible for:
  - a decline in the amount of time spent listening to the radio
  - a decline in the amount of time spent reading books and newspapers

- These displacement effects of television were strongest among young people

5. Changes in informational media

5.1. Informational TV programs

Programs supplied
- the percentage of broadcasting time spent on informational programming has decreased
- the program format of informational programs has become more and more 'lighthearted'

Programs consumed
- total viewing time spent watching informational programs has increased
- for the majority of people, television has grown into the main source of information about
  - internal politics
  - foreign politics

5.2. Informational radio programs

Programs supplied
- the percentage of broadcasting time spent on informational programming has decreased
- the program format of informational programs has become more and more 'lighthearted'

PERCENTAGE OF LISTENING TIME

	1962	1984
Spent on information	43%	16%
Spent on music	34%	79%

Conclusion
Radio has changed from a serious informational medium to a 'music box'

5.3. Informational books

Books supplied
- the number of books published is on the increase
- the number of text pages within books has decreased

Books consumed
- the percentage of non-fiction books read is declining

5.4. Newspapers and periodicals

Newspapers and periodicals supplied
- between 1960 and 1988 the number of text pages in newspapers has increased by more than 50%
- most periodicals are 'image-oriented' (instead of 'word-oriented')

Newspapers and periodicals consumed
- a growing part of the newspaper is skipped by the reader
- the market share of popular magazines is on the increase

5.5. Conclusions

Information offered
Except for newspapers, the quality of the information supplied by all other informational media has gone down

Information consumed
1. Television has grown into the main source of information about internal and foreign affairs

2. Radio, newspapers, periodicals and books have lost ground as information-providers

6. Strength and weaknesses of informational media

6.1. TV and radio compared

- Comparative studies of the relative effectiveness of (news) stories presented via television and print
- TV news is better recalled than news disseminated by radio
- Compared to TV, radio is more likely to further children's
  - fantasy
  - creativity
  - language use

6.2. TV and print compared

- Comparative studies of the relative effectiveness of (news) stories presented via television and print
- TV stories are better recalled than print stories
- Compared to TV, print is more likely to further children's
  - language use
  - reflexive thinking
- Whereas television is a suitable medium for communicating the headlines of the news, print is more capable of informing people about the background of the news

7. Final conclusions

7.1. The decline of information derived from radio, newspapers, periodicals, and books is compensated only in part by the growing information received through television

7.2. The changes in media use have lowered not the breadth but the depth of people's knowledge

7.3. Children's education and cognitive development is best served by a balanced media mix'

7.4. There is a need for initiatives that try and prevent a further reduction of the reading/viewing ratio

THE EUROPEAN FORUM FOR CHILD WELFARE

"CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN EUROPE"

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